

Dear Ron,

I am writing to you in regards to the application for Surgical First Assistants and Surgical Technologists. I have been a Certified Surgical Technologist for seven years. After working in the field at a facility in Lincoln, I am currently employed by Southeast Community College as an instructor in the Surgical Technology program. I work in both the didactic portion of the program as well as the clinical education portion.

I want to share with you an experience I had while working in the field as a Certified Surgical Technologist (CST). I was assigned to a surgical procedure scheduled as an Above Knee Amputation (AKA). There are many reasons a surgeon will perform an AKA. It was my job as a CST to find out why the patient was coming to surgery so I am amply prepared for what the surgeon will need to complete the surgery. This patient was scheduled because they had an infection. Through further information, I was informed the patient had been in surgery prior to this for a Total Knee Replacement. They had acquired a surgical site infection that became so extensive an AKA was the final option for treatment.

I immediately put myself in this patient's shoes. The patient was probably dealing with pain on a regular basis and had loss of function in their daily tasks. They went to the doctor with the hopes of gaining some normalcy back in their life and probably to be able to do physical activities. This patient was in their early 50's, which is fairly young for a Total Knee Replacement. They were scheduled for the surgery and excited to feel better. Can you imagine after you have surgery that is supposed to bring function back to your daily life, you acquire an infection, only to find out you will now be without a limb? How traumatic for this patient. An outcome like this for a patient can be prevented.

Surgical technologists play a vital role as a member of the operating room team. Their main purpose during a surgical procedure is to expedite the process and make the surgery go as smoothly as possible. The CST does this by having knowledge of the procedure, almost as well as the surgeon, so they can anticipate their needs. While doing this the CST is there to ensure the sterility of the procedure. Not only the sterility of the instruments but also the sterile field, the people working in that field and the staff working in the room who are not in the sterile role. The CST is the only person in the operating room suite who has had extensive training in sterile technique.

Education from an accredited surgical technology program is critical to provide the surgical technologist with this vital knowledge in aseptic technique that directly affects patient outcomes. As explained in the surgical case from above, you can see how one break in aseptic technique can be the cause of great detriment to a patient.

Regulation of the professions of surgical assisting and surgical technology is extremely important to ensure positive patient outcomes and there should be no question that this is a public concern. Thank you for your consideration of this proposal.

Sincerely,

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